



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/031,411	04/18/2002	Teresio Signaroldi	000035-044	2144

21839 7590 04/09/2003

BURNS DOANE SWECKER & MATHIS L L P
POST OFFICE BOX 1404
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22313-1404

EXAMINER

MITCHELL, KATHERINE W

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3677

DATE MAILED: 04/09/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/031,411

Applicant(s)

Examiner

Katherine W Mitchell

Art Unit

3677

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 April 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 1-18-2002 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

The preliminary amendment adding claim 25 and request for a title change have been entered.

Prior to the details of the examination, examiner would like to note for the record with great appreciation the excellent background explanation on pages 1 and 2 summarizing the basic steps, advantages, and contrary limitations between the S-laying and J-laying methods, which helps in understanding applicant's claimed improvements.

Information Disclosure Statement

1. Examiner has requested copies of the foreign and non-patent literature cited on IDS as all are missing. Examiner apologizes for the inconvenience, and will of course not make the next office action final due should any of the missing and presently uncited documents be used in a rejection for any reason other than necessitated by amendment. Also, an original copy of the filed IDS would be appreciated, which examiner will re-initial and return..

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(f) he did not himself invent the subject matter sought to be patented.

3. Claims 1-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(f) because the applicant did not invent the claimed subject matter.

USP 6524030 has a different inventive entity, including additional inventor Giovannini. See the table on the next page for a correlation between the pending claims and Giovannini et al. USP 6524030:

Art Unit: 3677

Claim # In pending application	USP 6524030 teaching
1	Claim 11 (depending from 1)
2	Spec col 3 lines 34-37
3,4	Spec col 3 lines 36-49
5	Claim 12, and Spec col 3 lines 50-58
6	Spec col 3 lines 59-63
7	Claim 14 and Spec col 4 lines 3-5
8,9	Spec col 4 lines 6-15
10,11	Spec col 4 lines 16-24
12,14	Claim 4, Fig 10, Spec col 4 lines 35-36
13	Spec col 8 line 66 – col 9 line 12
15,16	Spec col 13 lines 33-50
17,18	Spec col 13 lines 33-50
19	Spec col 12 lines 15-19
20	Spec col 4 lines 50-56
21	Spec col 5 lines 58-60
22	Claim 22 (depending from 15)
23	Claim 22 (depending from 15) and col 6 lines 1-11 and throughout
24,25	Spec col 4 lines 57-59

Art Unit: 3677

Double Patenting

4. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

5. Claims 1,5,7,12, 14, 22 and 23 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of double patenting over claims 11, 12, 14, 4, 4, 22, and 22 respectively of U. S. Patent No. 6524030 since the claims, if allowed, would improperly extend the "right to exclude" already granted in the patent.

The subject matter claimed in the instant application is fully disclosed in the patent and is covered by USP 6524030 since patent 6524030 and the application are

Art Unit: 3677

claiming common subject matter, as follows: A method and apparatus for underwater pipe laying with a lower guide assembly with roller allowing the pipe to bend, pivotable tower between 45-90 degrees, which can be fixed, and rollers mounted for rotation in bearings directly or indirectly resiliently displaceable are taught.

Conclusion


6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Katherine W Mitchell whose telephone number is 703-305-6713. The examiner can normally be reached on Tues-Fri 9 AM - 7:30 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, J. J. Swann can be reached on 703-306-4115. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-7687 for regular communications and 703-308-8623 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1113.

kwm
March 31, 2003


J. J. SWANN
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600